

4 years, has been eroded. Yet this budget keeps Pell grants right where they have been—with not one penny of an increase.

So I say to my friend from Illinois, this is what I hear Iowans talking about.

Mr. DURBIN. If I might further engage my colleague from Iowa in this dialog and go back to the point I made earlier, I say to the Senator, he has been chair and ranking Democrat on the Appropriations subcommittee that is responsible for education and health, and he has done a substantial and marvelous job, including record funding for the National Institutes of Health and amazing efforts to help the funding of education.

I ask my friend and colleague from Iowa to just reflect on what I have found, and I ask if he has found the same. I have gone to good schools in Illinois, and they have told me the results of the testing. The results of the testing, in the most recent rounds of testing in No Child Left Behind, required that the students reach a 60-percent plus of performance in terms of their learning ability and learning attainment, education attainment—60 percent.

In some of the schools I have visited in the suburban areas of Chicago—not in the cities, in the suburban areas of Chicago—here is what we found. When they took the test, we found that the white students in the schools were testing slightly over 60 percent. So they were meeting their target. The African-American students were testing in the 40-percent range; the Hispanic students in the 25- and 30-percent range; and the special education students, the students with disabilities, below 20 percent. All of these subgroups, if there are certain numbers of them in each school, are all expected to hit 60 percent.

I ask the Senator from Iowa if he has had similar experiences, and if he would share them with me and try to answer the question these educators asked. They said: If these groups are not meeting the test scores they are supposed to meet, and we are going to be labeled a failing school because of that, what are we supposed to do? What will you do to help us in terms of mentoring students, tutoring students, afterschool programs, and summer school programs?

My response to them, sadly, is, if you look at President Bush's own budget for No Child Left Behind, he underfunds the promised money for these school districts. The law authorizing No Child Left Behind said this year we would send \$34.3 billion to school districts across America to help these kids—\$34.3 billion—and the budget only provides \$24.9 billion. So we are underfunding it by \$9.4 billion.

Mr. HARKIN. Nine billion dollars, yes.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask the Senator, who deals with this appropriation, and the money behind it, where does this leave

our schools in Iowa and Illinois, taking the test, finding the challenge, but without the resources to address it? I ask unanimous consent, through the Chair, for the Senator from Iowa to respond, without my yielding the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. I say to my friend from Illinois, Lew Finch, who is the retiring superintendent of schools in Cedar Rapids, talked to me about this. There was an article in the paper also quoting him saying that their good schools are failing and they are doing it for the exact reason the Senator from Illinois pointed out. But here is what he said to me.

He said: I fear that all the progress we have made in the past, under things like the Americans with Disabilities Act, IDEA, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and integrating students in schools, bringing kids with disabilities into the mainstream of schools—he said: I fear what we are going to start doing is now segregating them out one more time, segregating them out of our schools again because they are being a drag on all the other students.

Mr. DURBIN. Let me add to what the Senator from Iowa said. This year we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, 50 years in America where we have said the integration of schools is essential to equality of opportunity. Separate but equal—Plessy v. Ferguson—was rejected by the Supreme Court 50 years ago, moving us toward a colorblind America and the integration of races in America, something essential to put the era of slavery and racism behind us.

Mr. HARKIN. Jim Crow.

Mr. DURBIN. And I say to the Senator from Iowa—and I know how deeply he feels about special education—I feel the same way, the same intensity level about the reaction, as parents walk into the school board meeting and say: This high school that I planned on sending my son to, my daughter to so she could get into a good college, I read in the morning paper is a failing school. Will you tell me why I made the sacrifice to buy an expensive home in the suburbs to send my child to a school for his future or her future and now it is a failing school? Explain it to me.

The educators will put the test scores up, and they will see it is the minority students and the students of Hispanic ancestry, as well as the special education students, who are leading to this conclusion.

Now, two things can happen, I say to the Senator from Iowa. The good thing that can happen is we will say: What can we do to bring all test scores up, particularly for those kids who are not doing well. Well, you will not find the answer in this budget. This budget misses the target by \$9 billion in providing extra teachers, extra technology, extra attention. It is not there.

But there is another course we can take that is sinister and ugly. It is the course that says: Incidentally, when those minority students don't come to school, don't go looking for them—would you?—because they are dragging down the test scores. That would be a terrible outcome.

Mr. HARKIN. Or vouchers.

Mr. DURBIN. Or vouchers. And for those—and there are many, even in this Chamber—who have given up on public education long ago, this is the answer to their prayers.

Mr. HARKIN. I know.

Mr. DURBIN. They will get bad test scores and say: Didn't we tell you public education has failed in America? I say to the Senator from Iowa, I think the funding of education is pushing us into a critical moment in the future of public education. Starting just 2 weeks ago, with the signature on the Omnibus appropriations bill, we will have the first Federal funding of a voucher program for private schools in the history of the United States of America.

Mr. HARKIN. Right here.

Mr. DURBIN. Right here in the District of Columbia.

Mr. HARKIN. Absolutely.

Mr. DURBIN. It is an answer to the prayers of those who have a loathing for public education and for the teachers in public schools who many think have the wrong political allegiance, whatever the reason might be. When you put all this together, you realize it is more than dollars. We are moving ourselves to a decision that is calling into question 50 years of American history and more.

I ask the Senator from Iowa, what is his impression as he reviews No Child Left Behind and this funding and the challenges it presents?

Mr. HARKIN. Our budget has basically two purposes. Any budget, whether it is your own personal family budget, a business budget, or the Government budget, has two purposes: One is to balance income and outlays—in other words, what is the income and what are the outlays, try to get some balance between the two—and the second purpose is to set priorities, choices.

I am sure the Senator is like I am. When you have an income, you sit down and say, this is our income. What is our mortgage? What is our car payment? What is our tuition, all those sorts of things. You add it up and you make choices on how you budget.

That is what this budget is. It is about choices, the choices that this President has chosen: tax breaks for the wealthy, continue those and make them permanent; continue to ship our jobs overseas; continue to underfund education, as the Senator has pointed out; and continue this march towards bigger and bigger debt, bigger and bigger deficits that is going to choke off any hope of having a viable Social Security and Medicare system for our kids and grandkids. Those are the choices in this budget.